

**Request for Proposal to Provide  
Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS)  
in Washington, DC**

**Release Date: Friday, May 20, 2011**

**Deadline for Submission: Monday, June 20, 2011 @ 4:00 p.m. Eastern  
Daylight Time (EDT)**

**For additional information, please contact:**

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Deputy Executive Director for Administrative Matters  
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1333 H Street, NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower  
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**or to obtain a copy of this proposal click on  
[www.dcpssc.org/requests/proposals/proposals.shtm](http://www.dcpssc.org/requests/proposals/proposals.shtm)**

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Fed Tax ID No.: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Prices contained in this proposal are subject to acceptance within \_\_\_\_\_ calendar days.

I have read, understand, and agree to all terms and conditions herein.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_

**See page 16 for instructions on submitting proposals.**

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## 1. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT

The Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia (Commission or PSC) is soliciting proposals to provide District-wide, Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week basis beginning July 13, 2011. TRS provides a platform to enable text telephone (TeleTYpewriter - TTY) and non-TTY users to communicate on the public switched telecommunications network. Through state of the art technology and highly trained and skilled Communication Assistants (CA), the District's TRS Provider provides deaf individuals and those with difficulty speaking with access to telecommunications services that are functionally equivalent to those used by hearing people communicating by voice.

The contract will be for a period of approximately sixteen months ending October 31, 2012, and two (2)/one-year option periods that can be exercised by the Commission in its sole discretion. Thus, the maximum period of the contract, with extensions, is three years. The District of Columbia Universal Service Trust Fund (DCUSTF) Administrator, currently Rolka Loube Saltzer Associates (RLSA), will manage the contract.

## 2. ACRONYMS / DEFINITIONS

<b>ASL</b>	American Sign Language – A visual language based on hand shape, position, movement and orientation of the hands in relation to each other and the body.
<b>ASCII</b>	An acronym for the American Standard Code for Information Interexchange which employs an eight bit code and can operate at any standard transmission baud rate including 300, 1200, 2400 and higher.
<b>BAUDOT</b>	A seven bit code, only five of which are information bits. Baudot is used by some text telephones to communicate with each other at a 45.5 baud rate.
<b>COMMON CARRIER</b>	Any person engaged as a common carrier in interstate communications by wire or radio as defined in Section 3(10) of the Communications Act of 1934, as amended by the Telecommunications Act of 1996.
<b>CA</b>	Communications Assistant - A person who relays conversation between two end users of TRS.
<b>HCO</b>	Hearing Carry Over - A reduced form of TRS in which the person with the speech disability is able to listen to the other end user and, in reply, the CA speaks the text as typed by the person with the speech disability. The CA does not type any conversation.

<b>P.01</b>	A grade of service for a telephone system. P.01 indicates that no more than one call in 100 can be blocked (not served immediately) by the system.
<b>TRS</b>	Telecommunications Relay Services – Telephone transmission services that provide the ability for an individual who has a hearing or speech disability to engage in communication by wire or radio with a hearing individual in a manner that is functionally equivalent to the ability of an individual who does not have a hearing or speech disability. TRS includes services that enable two-way communications between an individual who uses a text telephone or other non-voice terminal device and an individual who does not use such a device, speech-to-speech services, video relay services, and non-English relay services.
<b>TTY</b>	Text Telephone (TeleTYpewriter) – A machine that employs graphic communications in the transmission of coded signals through a wire or radio communications system.
<b>VCO</b>	Voice Carry Over – A reduced form of TRS with which the person with the hearing disability is able to speak directly to the other end user. The CA types the response back to the person with the hearing disability. The CA does not speak the conversation.
<b>STS</b>	Speech-to-Speech Relay Service – A telecommunications relay service that allows people with speech disabilities to communicate with voice telephone users through the use of specially trained CAs who understand the speech patterns of persons with disabilities and can repeat the words spoken by that person.
<b>Non-English Language Relay Service</b>	A telecommunications relay service that allows persons with hearing or speech disabilities who use languages other than English to communicate with voice telephone users in a shared language other than English through a CA who is fluent in that language.
<b>Qualified Interpreter</b>	An interpreter who is able to interpret accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK

#### 3.1 REQUIREMENTS

Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach and plan to meet the requirements below.

The relay system shall handle call procedures and traffic consistent with the essentials outlined in this section during the life of the contract.

- 3.1.1 The relay system shall comply with the FCC's existing orders, standards, rules and regulations, including 47 C.F.R. § 64.601 et seq. The TRS Provider and the relay system also shall comply with the Commission's Rules and Regulations, particularly Section 2819.7, which addresses minimum service requirements.

If new or increased standards are mandated during the contract term, the TRS Provider shall notify the DCUSTF Administrator at least 90 days in advance of the implementation. Formal Commission approval of proposed cost increases is necessary. For the balance of the contract term (option years included), the TRS Provider will bill the DCUSTF Administrator only for the incremental costs to implement the new standards.

- 3.1.2 It shall be the responsibility of the TRS Provider to perform under the contract in conformance with the District of Columbia Public Service Commission's Procurement Regulations, as well as all statutes, laws, codes, ordinances, regulations, rules, requirements, orders, and policies of governmental bodies, including, without limitation, the U.S. Government and the District of Columbia Government; and it shall be the sole responsibility of the selected TRS Provider to determine the procurement regulations, statutes, laws, codes, ordinances, regulations, rules, requirements, orders, and policies that apply and their effect. See **Attachment A** for the Government of the District of Columbia's Standard Contract Provisions.

- 3.1.3 The TRS Provider shall meet, by required timelines, any applicable Commission approval requirements.

- 3.1.4 The TRS Provider shall provide toll-free access to a relay center. The TRS Provider shall provide District-wide service 24 hours a day, every day of the year, in accordance with system requirements and performance standards identified in the RFP and contract, and in the Commission's rules, through toll-free access numbers for TTY users and for voice users.

- 3.1.5 The numbers used to service this RFP shall remain the same within the District. The current access numbers are:

TTY -- 1-800-643-3768

ASCII -- 1-800-898-0137  
Voice -- 1-800-643-3769  
Speech-to-Speech -- 1-800-898-0740  
Spanish-to-Spanish TTY -- 1-800-546-7111  
Spanish-to-Spanish Voice -- 1-800-546-5111

The TRS Provider also shall provide 24-hour, toll-free Customer Service. The current Customer Service Number will be transferred to any new vendor.

3.1.6 Reliability standards of system design:

- a. Uninterruptible Power - The TRS Provider shall provide redundancy features functionally equivalent to the equipment in normal central offices, including uninterruptible power for emergency use.
- b. The TRS Provider shall transmit conversations between TTY and voice callers in real time.
- c. Disaster Recovery Plan - The TRS Provider shall have a complete recovery plan for dealing with all types of natural and man-made problems and disasters. If a major problem or disaster occurs, the TRS Provider shall contact the DCUSTF Administrator immediately. (The recovery plan should describe the levels of escalation that will be employed to restore service.)

3.1.7 Calls Originating or Terminating in the District of Columbia - Calls must originate or terminate in the District of Columbia to prevent relay costs from being incurred by the DCUSTF if non-residents want to access the District of Columbia relay service.

3.1.8 Location of Call Centers – The TRS Provider shall provide a list indicating the location of call center(s) that will be relied upon to provide TRS in the District of Columbia.

3.1.9 Carrier of Choice – Equal access to interexchange carriers. TRS users shall have access to their chosen interexchange carrier through the TRS, and to all other operator services, to the same extent that such access is provided to voice users.

3.1.10 Evaluation Reports – The TRS Provider shall provide service evaluation reports to the DCUSTF Administrator on a monthly basis to ensure that the minimum service requirements are being satisfied by the TRS Provider.

3.1.11 Start-up - The TRS Provider shall provide an implementation plan to the DCUSTF Administrator that indicates the critical dates for the start-up of TRS and for customer notification. The TRS Provider must be able to meet

the July 13, 2011 start date with no disruption in service.

- 3.1.12 Outreach – The TRS Provider shall provide an Outreach Plan as part of its response to this Request for Proposals, along with the pricing information required in Section 6. The Commission shall decide whether Outreach will be included in the contract. (The most recent Outreach Plan of the current TRS Provider is included as Table 1 in Attachment C, as an example.)

## **3.2 TECHNOLOGY**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet the technology requirements below.**

- 3.2.1 ASCII and Baudot – The TRS Provider shall be capable of communications with ASCII and Baudot formats, at any speed in general use.
- 3.2.2 Speed of Answer - The TRS Provider shall answer 85% of calls within 10 seconds by any method which results in the calls' being placed immediately, not put in a queue or on hold.
- 3.2.3 The TRS system shall be designed to a P.01 standard.
- 3.2.4 Voice Mail and Interactive Menus - The CA must alert the TRS user to the presence of a recorded message and/or an interactive menu through a "hot key" on the CA's terminal. The hot key will send text from the CA to a customer's TTY, indicating that the recording or interactive menu has been encountered. The TRS Provider shall electronically capture recorded messages and retain them for the length of the call. The TRS Provider may not impose any charges for additional calls which must be made by the relay user in order to complete calls involving recorded or interactive messages. TRS services shall be capable of handling pay-per-call telephone calls.
- 3.2.5 Handling of Emergency Calls - The TRS Provider shall assist callers who, instead of calling 911, have called the relay center for emergency assistance, and the CA must follow established procedures when interacting with the 911 dispatcher.
- 3.2.6 Interstate and International Calls - The TRS Provider shall handle these types of calls for District of Columbia TRS customers.
- 3.2.7 Traffic Reports – The TRS Provider must submit detailed monthly traffic reports to the DCUSTF Administrator no later than the 25th of the month following that in which the service was provided.
- 3.2.8 Cellular and Other Communications Services - The TRS Provider must have procedures for handling cellular and other communications service calls and the related billing procedures.

- 3.2.9 Voice Carryover (VCO) and Hearing Carryover (HCO) - The TRS Provider shall provide these services in accordance with FCC guidelines.
- 3.2.10 The TRS Provider shall have “in-house” procedures for resolving customer complaints.
- 3.2.11 Confidentiality and Conversation Content - Except as authorized by Section 705 of the Communications Act, 47 U.S.C § 605, CAs are prohibited from disclosing the content of any relayed conversation regardless of content and, with a limited exception for Speech-to-Speech CAs, CAs are prohibited from keeping records of the content of any conversation beyond the duration of a call. However, Speech-To-Speech CAs may retain information from a particular call in order to facilitate the completion of consecutive calls at the request of the user.
- 3.2.12 Spanish Relay Services - The TRS Provider must have CAs capable of handling Spanish language calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These services should be available in both Spanish-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English.
- 3.2.13 Directory Assistance – The TRS Provider shall provide callers with access to local and long distance directory assistance. The TRS Provider should provide this service and its billing procedures to end-users.
- 3.2.14 Automatic Numbering Identification (ANI) - The TRS Provider shall use ANI, unless it is not available from the Local Exchange Carrier.
- 3.2.15 Caller Identification (Caller ID) - The TRS Provider must have procedures and technology to provide Caller ID services.
- 3.2.16 Message Retrieval - The TRS Provider shall provide retrieval of messages from the answering machine and voice mail.
- 3.2.17 Call Release - The TRS Provider shall provide call release services.
- 3.2.18 Speed Dialing - The TRS Provider shall provide speed dialing services.

### **3.3 OPERATIONAL PROTOCOL, SKILLS, TRAINING, AND OTHER STANDARDS**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet operational protocol, skill, training, and other standards below.**

- 3.3.1 Standardized Greeting - The CA shall use a pre-determined script (voice or mechanical depending on the equipment used by the caller) to announce himself/herself as an agent for the District of Columbia TRS and include the gender and identification number of the CA.
- 3.3.2 Each CA shall possess the following skills:



- a. Competence in typing, grammar, spelling; interpretation of typewritten ASL; and familiarity with the hearing and speech disability community's culture, language, and etiquette.
  - b. The CA must possess clear and articulate voice communications.
  - c. The CA must provide a typing speed of at least 60 words per minute.
  - d. The CA must be a high school graduate or have passed a high school equivalency examination.
- 3.3.3 Code of Ethics - A CA "Code of Ethics," which will serve as a guide to CAs' professional performance, should be included in the proposal.
- 3.3.4 Each CA shall comply with the following guidelines for relaying communications:
- a. The CA shall identify himself or herself as a Communications Assistant (TRS operator) and provide his or her gender and identification number.
  - b. The CA shall translate typed English to correct spoken English so that the non-TTY user can understand and converse with the caller.
  - c. The CA shall inform the TTY user of the non-TTY user's tone of voice, in parentheses. These descriptions should include terms such as laughing or yelling, as well as background noise.
  - d. The CA shall keep the end user informed of the progress of the call, using such terms as ringing, busy signal, put on hold, or disconnected.
  - e. The CA shall honor the TTY user's option of telling the CA what aspects of the call the TTY user will handle.
  - f. The CA shall communicate exactly what is said when the call is answered and during the conversation, unless either party specifically requests otherwise.
  - g. When relay services need to be explained to a non-TTY user, the CA shall indicate to the TTY user that he or she is explaining the service.
  - h. The CA shall use a conversational tone appropriate to the type of call made by the TTY user.
  - i. The CA shall inform the TTY user if a different person becomes involved in the phone call.

- j. If a different CA becomes involved in the call, both end users shall be notified. The new CA shall give his or her gender and identification number.
- k. If an end user makes subsequent calls after the initial one (to the relay center) and the called line is busy, the CA shall permit unlimited re-dial attempts.
- l. All comments (to the relay) by either end user shall be relayed.
- m. The CA shall verify the spelling of all proper nouns, addresses, and numbers that are spoken.
- n. The CA shall disconnect the outbound call when the inbound caller disconnects.
- o. If a caller wants to register a complaint, the CA shall give the caller the option to be connected to a supervisor or to be given the customer service number.
- p. The CA shall not counsel, advise, or interject personal opinions into a relay call. The CA shall not have a personal conversation with an individual using the relay services.
- q. Callers do not have to give their names or the names of the parties they are calling. The CA may request the name only if it will help to explain the relay service, and the CA must explain how this will help the call.
- r. If a TTY user types an "S," the CA must recognize that this indicates a person with difficulty speaking.
- s. If a TTY caller reaches an answering machine, the CA shall let the end user know and give the caller the option to leave a message or disconnect the call.

### **3.4 CALL SERVICE SPECIFICATIONS**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet the call service specification requirements below.**

- 3.4.1 Call charges to TRS users will cost no more than charges for functionally equivalent service paid by callers that use "regular" telephone services.
- 3.4.2 The TRS Provider shall provide billing to end users or their carriers for interstate and intrastate calls, if billing is not provided by others.
- 3.4.3 The TRS Provider shall allow TRS users the ability to use calling cards, credit cards, and third-party billing and make collect calls and calls to and

from hotel rooms. The TRS Provider shall explain how these types of billing will be made available to the user.

- 3.4.4 The TRS Provider shall assure that billed minutes to the District will be rounded to the nearest fraction of a minute.
- 3.4.5 The TRS Provider shall provide local calls, long distance calls and international calls and explain how they will be identified and documented for billing purposes, specifically those calls to be paid by the District of Columbia Universal Service Trust Fund and those to be paid by the TRS Administrator for the Federal Communications Commission.
- 3.4.6 The TRS Provider shall list long distance charges on the end user's bill.
- 3.4.7 The TRS Provider shall transmit the billing record detail to the billing agent (if applicable).

#### **4. COMPANY BACKGROUND, INSURANCE, REFERENCES, AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The proposal must contain the following information on the company offering to provide TRS, to demonstrate the bidder's qualifications and ability to provide TRS in the District of Columbia:

##### **4.1 COMPANY INFORMATION**

- 4.1.1 Company Ownership – If incorporated, provide the state in which the company is incorporated and the date of incorporation. An out-of-state company must become qualified to do business in the District of Columbia as a foreign corporation before a contract can be executed.
- 4.1.2 Disclosure of any prior or on-going contract failures, contract breaches, and any civil or criminal litigation or pending investigation which involves the company or in which the company has been judged guilty or liable.
- 4.1.3 Company's background/history and qualifications for providing TRS in the District of Columbia.
- 4.1.4 Length of time the company has offered TRS.
- 4.1.5 Whether the company has ever been engaged in a contract with any District agency? If "Yes," specify when, for what duties, and for which agency.
- 4.1.6 The Company's Dun and Bradstreet number.
- 4.1.7 The location of the Company's headquarters and office(s) that will be assigned to the District of Columbia TRS.

- 4.1.8 The Company's number of employees, both locally and nationally.
- 4.1.9 The location(s) from which employees will be assigned to the District of Columbia TRS.
- 4.1.10 An organizational chart identifying the hierarchical structure of the company's personnel involved in the contracting and provision of TRS. Please include management, legal division, supervisors, etc.
- 4.1.11 Resumes for key staff to be responsible for the performance of any contract resulting from this RFP.
- 4.1.12 The name, address, and telephone number of the company's point of contact for a contract resulting from this RFP.

## **4.2 INSURANCE**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet the insurance requirements below.**

- 4.2.1 The TRS Provider must provide insurance.

### **4.2.2. REQUIRED POLICIES**

The TRS Provider shall maintain (i) workers compensation insurance in accordance with statutory limits; (ii) a general liability insurance policy with limits of at least the value of the contract; (iii) an employer's liability policy; and (iv) an umbrella policy providing coverage at least as extensive as the underlying policies.

### **4.2.3. REQUIRED ENDORSEMENTS**

All policies required hereunder must show the bidder as the certificate holder and must contain language requiring a sixty (60) day prior notification directly to the Commission.

All insurance policies shall be issued by insurers licensed to do business in the District of Columbia and any insuring company is required to have a minimum rating of an A-Class C in Best's Key Rating Guide published by A.M. Best and Company, Inc.

## **4.3 REFERENCES**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet the reference requirement below.**

The bidder must provide the names and contact information of at least three (3) customer references from similar projects performed for private, state and/or

large local government clients within the last five years.

#### **4.4 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

**Each bidder shall explain in writing its approach, procedures, and plan to meet the requirement below.**

The TRS Provider shall not enter into any partnership agreement or contract with any person or organization that could be construed as a conflict of interest for the provision of TRS in the District of Columbia. The TRS Provider will inform the DCUSTF Administrator of any relationship that it becomes aware of or that develops during the term of the contract that may be interpreted as a conflict of interest.

#### **4.5 CERTIFIED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE (CBE)**

Under the provisions of the Small Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Amendment Act of 2005,<sup>1</sup> preference shall be given to individuals and firms that are certified by the Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) as having resident business ownership, being a Local Business Enterprise, being a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise, or as operating in an Enterprise Zone. To take advantage of this preference, a copy of the certification acknowledgment letter must be submitted with the individual or firm's submission.

In accordance with this law, the following preferences shall be awarded in evaluating a Respondent's proposal:

- Three points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as a small business enterprise;
- Five points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as resident-owned business;
- Ten points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as a longtime resident business;
- Two points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as a local business enterprise;
- Two points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as a local business enterprise with its principal office located in an enterprise zone; and
- Two points shall be awarded if the individual or firm is certified as a disadvantaged business enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> D.C. Code § 2-218.02 et.seq. (Supp 2010)

A Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) shall be entitled to any or all of the preferences provided in this section, but in no case shall a CBE be entitled to a preference of more than 12 points or a reduction in price of more than 12 percent.

Information: For information regarding the application process, contact the DSLBD at the following address or telephone number:

Department of Small and Local Business Development  
Government of the District of Columbia  
One Judiciary Square  
441 - 4th Street, N.W., 9<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 970 N  
Washington, D.C. 20001  
(202) 727-3900 (Telephone Number)  
(202) 724-3786 (Facsimile Number)

Any individual or firm with Local Business Enterprise or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise certification as its joint venture or constituent entity, shall be entitled to the applicable preference points provided for in the Small, Local, and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act, Part D, Subpart 2, Sec. 2343 in direct proportion to the percentage of the effort to be performed by the Local Business Enterprise or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise. A copy of the certification acknowledgment letter must be submitted with the Respondent's proposal.

## **5. SUBCONTRACTING**

- 5.1 If the bidder desires to subcontract any part of the contracted services to a subcontractor, the bidder shall identify the specific subcontractor and the specific requirements of this RFP that the proposed subcontractor will perform.
- 5.5.2 The bidder shall provide the same company information for any proposed subcontractor as requested in the Company Information section.
- 5.5.3 The bidder shall provide three (3) references for each subcontractor.
- 5.5.3 The bidder shall provide insurance information for each subcontractor before any work is performed.
- 5.5.4 The bidder shall explain in writing how it will ensure that each subcontractor complies with the Conflict of Interest requirement above.
- 5.5.5 If the TRS Provider intends to use a subcontractor during the term of the contract that has not been identified in its response to the RFP, the TRS Provider shall inform the DCUSTF Administrator and receive approval from the Commission prior to entering into a subcontractor relationship.
- 5.5.6 The fact that delay resulted from a subcontractor's conduct, negligence, or

failure to perform shall not excuse the TRS Provider from the liquidated damages provisions of this contract.

## **6. COST/PRICING**

- 6.1 Basic Cost - The bidder shall submit a fixed rate per session minute covering the first year of the contract for the services identified in the Scope of Work section. A separate rate per minute also covering Outreach shall be provided as well.
- 6.2 The bidder shall provide a fixed rate per session minute covering the two one-year extensions of the contract that the Commission may opt to exercise. The fixed rate per session minute shall be submitted for the services identified in the Scope of Work section. A separate rate per minute also covering Outreach shall be provided as well.
- 6.3 The bidder's proposal must clearly identify any charges for unbillable and uncollectible calls and must provide sufficient information to evaluate whether any such charges are reasonable.
- 6.4 The bidder's proposal shall discuss its detailed plan for implementing TRS in the District of Columbia by July 13, 2011. The plan must describe how the transition from the existing TRS Provider to the new company will be accomplished. The plan must include procedures for adequate advertising to notify and educate relay users about the change and include a timeline with set dates for major steps in the implementation process from contract award date to start date.
- 6.5 The bidder's pricing must be firm and include prices for all mandatory services. No estimates or contingencies are allowed. All prices submitted in response to the RFP will be considered the company's best offer.

## **7. INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF RESPONSE TO THE RFP**

- 7.1 All questions and/or comments regarding this RFP must be received in writing by e-mail as follows:

Questions must reference **PSC-11-04 - Request for Proposal to Provide Telecommunications Relay Service (TRS) in Washington, DC** and be addressed to:

Jesse P. Clay, Jr.  
Deputy Executive Director for Administrative Matters  
District of Columbia Public Service Commission  
1333 H Street, NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower  
Washington, D.C. 20005  
Email: [jclay@psc.dc.gov](mailto:jclay@psc.dc.gov)

The deadline for submitting questions is **May 30, 2011 by 2:00 p.m. EDT.** All questions and/or comments will be addressed in writing and responses mailed, faxed or e-mailed to prospective vendors on or about **June 3, 2011 by 4:00 p.m. EDT.** Please provide company name, address, phone number, fax number, e-mail address, and contact person when submitting questions.

In order to assist bidders, the requirements for a D.C Relay Outreach Plan, usage information, and a sample Consumer Service Report are included in Attachment C.

**7.2 RFP Timeline – These dates represent a tentative schedule of events. The Commission reserves the right to modify these dates at any time with appropriate notice to prospective companies.**

Publish RFP on the Commission website	5/20/11
RFP questions from bidders due to the Commission	5/30/11
Responses to questions posted on the Commission's website	6/03/11
Deadline for submission of proposals	6/20/11
Selection approved by Commission	6/24/11
Contract negotiations	6/29/11
Contract award	7/01/11
Commencement of Services	7/01/11

**7.3 Companies shall submit one (1) original proposal and three (3) copies to:**

**Jesse P. Clay, Jr.  
Deputy Executive Director for Administrative Matters  
DC Public Service Commission  
1333 H Street, NW, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, West Tower  
Washington, DC 20005**

**7.4 The Commission must receive proposals no later than 4:00 p.m. EDT on Monday, June 20, 2011.** Proposals that do not arrive by the proposal opening time and date **will not be accepted.** Companies may submit their proposals any time prior to the above stated deadline.

**7.5 The Commission will not consider any proposals that are sent by facsimile, e-mail, or telephone.**

**7.6 For ease of evaluation, proposals must be presented in the following format.**



Exceptions to this format will be considered during the evaluation process and may reflect negatively on the company's score.

- 7.7 Transmittal Letter – A transmittal letter prepared on the company's business stationery must accompany each proposal. An individual authorized to bind the company to all statements contained in the proposal, including those related to services to be provided and prices, must sign the letter. No price information shall be discussed in the letter.

7.7.1 Proposals must begin with a table of contents, be organized consistent with the sections and subsections of this RFP, and have divider tabs for each section.

7.7.2 The entire response must be submitted in no less than 12-point font. 7.8 If complete responses cannot be provided without referencing supporting documentation, such documentation must be provided with the proposal and specific references should be made to the tab, page, section and/or paragraph where the supplemental information can be found.

- 7.9 Proposals are to be prepared in such a way as to provide a straightforward, concise delineation of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of this RFP.

- 7.10 Descriptions of how any and all equipment and/or services will be used to meet the requirements of this RFP shall be given in detail, along with any appropriately marked information documents.

## **8. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

- 8.1 The Commission will evaluate and score each proposal based upon the following four areas, listed by priority order:

8.1.1 System, Operations and Service Quality

- Mandatory Requirements
- Technology
- Operational Protocol, Skills, Training, and Standards
- Call Services Specifications
- Company Background, Insurance, and Subcontractors

8.1.1.1 Cost/Price

8.1.1.2 References

8.1.1.3 Certified Business Enterprise (CBE)

8.2 **System, Operations, and Service Quality Rating System:** The System, Operations and Service Quality area, as outlined in Section 3, "Scope of Work," Section 4, "Company Background, Insurance, References, and Conflict of Interest," and Section 5, "Subcontracting," is comprised of five specific factors, and points associated with the "CBE factor" Section 4 provides for a total point score of 182 points. These factors, with their associated maximum point scores, are outlined below:

- Mandatory Requirements 40 points
- Technology 40 points
- Operational Protocol, Skills, Training, & Standards 40 points
- Call Services Specifications 30 points
- Company Background, Insurance, Conflict of Interest, and Subcontractors 20 points

8.3 **Cost/Price Rating System:** The Cost/Price area, as outlined in Section 5, "Cost/Pricing," will not be given a specific score. However it will be carefully considered in performing an integrated assessment of the proposals leading to selection of the best value bidder.

8.4 **References Rating System:** The References area, as outlined in Section 4, "Company Background and References," will have a total point score of 30 points.

8.5 **Certified Business Enterprise 12 points**

Pursuant to the provisions of the Small, Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Development and Assistance Act of 2005, (D.C. Official Code § 2-218.01 *et seq.*) a maximum of 12 points may be awarded to Respondents who meet the Act's definition(s) of Small, Local and Disadvantaged Business Enterprises. The award of preference points will be made as follows in accordance with the Law: 1) local business enterprises receive four participation points; 2) disadvantaged businesses receive three participation points; 3) businesses with resident ownership receive three participation points; and, 4) businesses located in enterprise zones receive two participation points. No business shall be permitted to receive preference points unless the enterprise has been issued a certificate of registration under the provisions of this law.

8.6 Reference checks will not be limited to specific customer references, but may include other relay and state officials, consumers, and organizations serving people with disabilities.

8.7 The Commission reserves the right to make test calls.

8.8 The Commission will evaluate each proposal based on the requirements in this RFP. The company must acknowledge and agree to perform all RFP requirements and meet all performance standards.

- 8.9 When the Commission renders its final decision on the selection of a TRS Provider, the award will be posted on the following website: [www.dcpssc.org](http://www.dcpssc.org).

**To Locate Information on the District of Columbia's PSC website:**

1. Go to the District of Columbia PSC's home page  
<http://www.dcpssc.org>
  2. Click on "Requests..." (located on left side of page).
  3. Click on "Requests for Proposals."
  4. Click on "Contract Awards."
  5. Scroll down list and click on desired award to receive details.
- 8.10 Any award is contingent upon the successful negotiation of final contract terms and upon approval of the Commission. Negotiations will be confidential and not subject to disclosure to competing companies, unless and until an agreement to do so is reached. If contract negotiations cannot be concluded, the Commission may negotiate a contract with the next highest scoring company or withdraw the RFP.

## **9. TERMS, CONDITIONS, AND EXCEPTIONS**

- 9.1 The DCUSTF Administrator will monitor performance following the contract award for customer service, timeliness, quality, technology, flexibility, and pricing.
- 9.2 The Commission reserves the right to alter, amend, or modify any provisions of the RFP, or to withdraw this RFP at any time prior to the award of a contract, if it is in the best interest of the District of Columbia to do so.
- 9.3 The Commission reserves the right to reject any and all proposals received prior to contract award.
- 9.4 The Commission will award the contract to the bidder whose proposal conforms to the solicitation and is most advantageous to the District of Columbia, taking into consideration cost and other criteria set forth in this document, and based upon the specified evaluation criteria.

In evaluating and selecting bidders for award, the Commission may award the contract to a higher-rated, higher-priced TRS Provider when the offer is consistent with the evaluation criteria set forth and the Commission determines that any added benefits are worth the price premium. While the Commission will strive to exercise maximum objectivity, the source selection process, by its very nature, is subjective and professional judgment is implicit and necessary.

Proposals that appear unrealistic in terms of technical commitments, reflect a lack of technical competence, or are indicative of failure to comprehend

the complexity and risk of this contract may be rejected.

- 9.5 Proposals may be withdrawn by written or facsimile notice received prior to the proposal closing date and time.
- 9.6 Prices offered by companies are irrevocable offers for the term of the contract and any contract extensions. The selected company agrees to provide the purchased services at the costs, rates, and fees set forth in its proposal in response to this RFP. No other costs, rates, or fees will be payable to the selected company for implementation of its proposal.
- 9.7 Neither the DCUSTF Administrator nor the Commission is liable for any costs incurred by companies prior to entering into a formal contract. Costs of developing the proposal, or any other such expenses incurred by the company in responding to the RFP, are entirely the responsibility of the bidder. Neither the DCUSTF Administrator nor the Commission shall reimburse companies for such costs. All submitted proposals become the property of the Commission.
- 9.8 All proposals must identify any subcontractors and outline the contractual relationship between the bidder and each subcontractor. An authorized individual of each proposed subcontractor must sign a statement that the subcontractor has read and agrees to abide by the bidder's obligations. Any such statements shall be included as part of the bidder's proposal.
- 9.9 The TRS Provider will have the sole responsibility for the contract. The TRS Provider will be responsible for the non-performance of any or all subcontractors.
- 9.10 Additional "Terms, Conditions, and Exceptions" are located in **Attachment A**,

## ATTACHMENT A

Public Service Commission of the District of Columbia's Procurement regulations – 15 DCMR § 2200 *et. seq.* (2000). go to [www.dcpssc.org](http://www.dcpssc.org) (homepage), click on the Contracting and Procurement button, click on Requests for Proposals, and click on the RFP for Case No. 988.

## **ATTACHMENT B**

### **Disclosure Statement**

The following individuals will perform the work described in this proposal:

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Please indicate, to the best of your knowledge, if any of these individuals is related to or has worked for the following individuals in the past five (5) years:

Chairman Betty Ann Kane  
Commissioner Richard E. Morgan  
Commissioner Lori Murphy Lee

## **ATTACHMENT C**

### **Background Information**

#### **Tables 1 - 7**

Table 1 – D.C. Relay Outreach Plan Requirements

Table 2 – Monthly Customer Service Call Totals

Table 3 – Monthly Usage - Number of TRS Calls

Table 4 – Completed TRS Calls by Jurisdiction

Table 5 – Number of Completed TRS Calls by Method

Table 6 – District of Columbia Relay Service –Jurisdictional Summary

Table 7 – DC Relay Service - Customer Service Report